

# NH Governor's Commission on Disability

November 13, 2014



# Training and Educational Events

The GCD provides training and educational events as a means to meet the legislated mandate to serve as a source of information to the public regarding all services to individuals with disabilities.

- Disability Etiquette
- Workplace FrAGRance
- Plan Reading Workshop Collaboration
- Legislative Training
- NEADA Field Based Training
- Fostering Connections with People Living with Disabilities
- Mini-Seminars



# Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD)



- The GCD was statutorily created in 1977 pursuant to RSA 275-C.
- The GCD is a statewide agency that serves people who have cross-disabilities, advises the Governor, Legislature, and other state agencies regarding disability-related compliance, and provides assistance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability law compliance.
- The work of the GCD is multidimensional and requires many individuals supporting the mission to remove the barriers (architectural, attitudinal or programmatic) that bar persons with disabilities from participating in the mainstream of society.

# Committee Membership

30 members appointed by the Governor

20 Members from the general public +

10 Members from service organizations who serve people w/disabilities +

6 Ex Officio Members (non-voting) +

Executive Director of the GCD



# Committees Internal to the GCD:

Architectural Barrier Free Design – ADA compliance, reviews leases to ensure accessibility, advise and consult on new construction and renovations, and review complaints alleging violations of accessibility code.

Executive Steering Committee – advises the Executive Director and assists in the overall handling of the mission of the Commission.

Legislative Committee – Follows and studies activities of the legislature as they pertain to people with disabilities in NH. May advise or inform elected officials in matters pertaining to people with disabilities. Provides direction to the Executive Director relative to potential testimony to the legislature.

Nominating Committee – recruits and screens prospective candidates for membership on the GCD.

# External Committees :

## (not an exhaustive list)

- Medical Care Advisory Committee – to participate in Medicaid related rule development and provide feedback relevant to people with disabilities.
- State Coordinating Council for Community Transportation - to foster and guide the coordination of community transportation on the regional level thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of transportation with a focus on availability and accessibility for all populations.
- State Rehabilitation Council – advises Vocational Rehabilitation on policies, procedures, and employment related issues for people with disabilities.
- Parking Initiative – works with the DMV to improve the accessibility of parking and ensure ADA compliance.
- NH Commission on Deaf and Hard of Hearing – advise on matters germane to citizens who are deaf or hard of hearing to ensure access to competent interpreters at all levels of government, promote access to community based services, and develop additional services to enhance the ability of the deaf or hard of hearing community to contribute to their communities.

# Staff at the GCD



- Executive Director

Oversees the daily operations of the GCD staff and office. Communicates and collaborates with relevant agencies and individuals to further the mission of the GCD. Provides testimony to the legislature relative to matters affecting individuals with disabilities. Acts as secretary to the GCD and executes the directives of the GCD membership.

- Administrative Support

Triages phone calls from the public and Commission members and provides resources and contact information for services and agencies related to disability issues. Assists in all office operations and provides support to office staff, as well as Commission members. Monitor expenditures and accounts receivable. Develops budgets and processes all invoices.

- Information and Referral Specialist

Fields and responds to phone calls from the public and addresses issues with the dissemination of information such as Service Animal issues, Social Security Administration questions, Human Rights inquiries, HUD housing, accessibility w/ public and private entities, and various topics from people with disabilities.

# Staff at the GCD Continued

- Accessibility Specialist

Reviews and inspects NH owned and leased properties for compliance w/ the ADA and the NH Architectural Barrier Free Design Code. Advises and consults with businesses, public entities, and individuals on ADA compliance as well as requirements of the NH State Building Code, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Fair Housing Act. Tracks and reports on legislative activity to the internal legislative committee. Manages social media accounts and the website for the GCD.

- Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

The SILC is a cross-disability, statewide, volunteer council representing the independent living needs of people with significant disabilities in NH. The GCD houses dedicated SILC staff who researches and maintains current resources related to disability and independent living. Also responsible for producing the SILC newsletter and tip sheets.

- Client Assistance Program (CAP)

The GCD houses the CAP which addresses and works to resolve any issues in the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and independent living programs. The CAP acts as an advocate, mediator, and information source relative to employment matters under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as well as, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



# Grants

- **Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP)**

TEDP is a grant that provides oversight and acts in an advisory capacity to the Technology Equipment Distribution Grant (currently with DHHS) and Newsline for the Blind (funds flow through the GCD from PUC).

- **New England ADA Center Affiliation (NEADA)**

The GCD is contracted with NEADA to be the NH State Affiliate. NEADA Center is a member of the National Network of ADA Centers and provides information, guidance, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act tailored to meet the needs of business, government, and individuals at local, regional, and national levels.



# Some of the Agencies in collaboration with the GCD

- Department of Education/Vocational Rehabilitation
- Granite State Independent Living
- New England ADA
- Developmental Disabilities Council
- Service Link
- Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Older Independent Blind Program
- Brain Injury Association of NH
- NH Secretary of State's Office
- NH Dept. of Health and Human Services



# Newsletters and Publications:

- GCD E-Newsletter – a monthly collaboration between SILC and the GCD with over 1,000 recipients receiving this newsletter for people with disabilities. The newsletter educates and informs NH residents and visitors on issues and websites important to people with disabilities.
- SILC newsletter – published monthly and disseminated electronically to over 2,000 recipients who forward it to an additional 2,000 recipients. This newsletter reaches businesses, Chambers of Commerce, colleges, community organizations, agencies providing services to people with developmental disabilities, hospitals, libraries, mental health centers, minority health groups, parents, parent groups, peer support groups, schools, and senior citizen groups (to name a few).
- Beyond the Barriers – monthly publication in the Union leader newspaper which informs readers about upcoming events, trainings, workshops, and educational seminars in regards to people with disabilities.



# Additional Activities at the GCD

- The NH Governor's Accessibility Awards:

This is a yearly event where the GCD recognizes the outstanding accomplishments and leadership within a business, organization, or individual that supports independence, inclusive and accessible environments and services for individuals with disabilities. These awards recognize achievements and/or demonstrate the efforts that go above and beyond normal requirements and business responsibilities. Criteria for the awards are specific to efforts of significant advocacy, inclusion, integration, and improvements in the lives and communities for those who have disabilities of any kind.

- Employment Leadership Awards:

The GCD participates with the Employment Leadership Committee to participate in this yearly event recognizing some of NH's outstanding employers who have demonstrated leadership, innovation, and/or a commitment to adopting hiring practices that improve employment opportunities for workers with disabilities.

